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ABSTRACT

This paper contains a course outline for a teaching and learning unit to examine India's slums from a geographic perspective. Students in a college freshman and sophomore Human Geography class will discuss the problems and prospects of these slums. The unit is divided into three parts: (1) background information examining the slums from a contemporary geographic perspective while simultaneously discussing its relevance in a Human Geography class; (2) student activities involving critical thinking where students examine these characteristics of the slums through the use of role-playing; and (3) a slide presentation showing many of these slum conditions as they presently exist. Each part of the unit may be covered in one 60-minute class session. (EH)

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by

Rosalie Gendimenico

Thomas M. Orf

Curriculum Projects Developed by 1997 Seminar Participants

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CONTEMPORARY SLUMS OF INDIA FROM A GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: A THREE DAY COLLEGE UNIT

THOMAS M. ORF

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GEOGRAPHY

PRESTONSBURG COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The purpose of this teaching and learning unit is to examine India's slums from a geographic perspective and discuss the problems and prospects of these slums to freshman and sophomore college students in a Human Geography class. Thus, this unit can be used in either a community college or university setting. The unit will be divided into three parts in which each is covered in one 60 minute class session: 1) Background information examining the slums from a contemporary geographic perspective while simultaneously discussing its relevance in a Human Geography class; 2) critically thinking student centered activities where students examine these characteristics of the slums through the use of role playing; and 3) a slide presentation showing many of these slum conditions as they presently exist. The information used for this study was gathered through a literature review as well as on hand data gathered during the 1997 Fulbright-Hays Seminar on India.

Day One: Background Information

The concept of this three day unit very simple: to examine the rural-urban third world migration phenomenon (and subsequent slum development) that has occurred globally over the past few decades using India as a case study. For the students to fully understand the rationale and purpose of the slums, they must understand from where these people are originally migrating, why they are coming to this new area and building a slum, and what reward they hope to achieve by initiating this migration.

Rural-urban third world migrations are used as a basic element on a unit of global migration in Human Geography. For example, Rubenstein (1996) and Knox (1998) integrate migration very well in their introductory Human Geography texts, although this concept is dealt with in

some fashion with every textbook on the subject. This topic can also be used as an integral part of any course in World Geography, Third World Development or Population Geography.

Within the scope of the class, the main topic to be examined is economic characteristics in relationship to migration issues. The main focus of this type of migration involves economic betterment and India is no exception to this rule. Neoclassical theory of migration suggests that differences in net economic advantages, chiefly differences in wages, are the main causes of migration of this type (Crook 1996, Roy 1992). Migrants usually move due to jobs or perception of jobs based on information of employment. For third world migrations based on rural to urban trends, this can occur without the knowledge of skills needed to land these jobs. Many of these people have skills mainly with farming since they come from rural areas and are in no way ready for survival skills needed to succeed in an urban environment.

Overall, classic migration theory states that there are a combination of push factors (those that push people away from an old area) and pull factors (those that pull individuals into a new area) that are perpetuating the migration in India. The largest push factor deals with characteristics that prevent a livelihood from the land. Bad soils, increase in the number landless workers, increase in the size of the population of an area, village inequities, environmental problems caused by India's mass industrialization) are all reasons found for the move (Roy 1992). Pull factors such as employment options, perception of income increase and responses to industrialization (such as increase in the number of unskilled positions such as rickshaw pullers, porters, servants, etc. created with the increase supply of middle class family neighborhoods) are usually found. Add this to the fact that about 250 million people in India have insufficient income to meet their basic food needs of 2,200 calories a day which can aid to the migration

(Homer-Dixon, 1996). This has caused a dramatic increase in the number of slum neighborhoods that have developed in the past 20 years.

The most striking characteristic of the increase in the slums is that India has expanded dramatically economically (especially in industrialization) increasing the size of the middle class thus augmenting the need for unskilled labor (Homer-Dixon, 1996) Within the push and pull migration factors, the huge increase of manufacturing and industrial jobs that have been created by the government increases has been profound in the migration movement (Woodcock, 1983 and Roy , 1992). The industrialization increases the need for jobs in the city while simultaneously destroying farming land in other areas due to lack of available space or the creation of environmental problems such as toxic dumping into rivers, pollution, etc. Since much of the arable farming land has been lost due to this industrialization, individuals and families have no choice but to migrate to the cities to try and get work to survive. Also, may middle class Indians are able to increase their incomes by working in the industrial areas where more money is becoming available (Woodcock, 1983).

Not all the migrants that are moving, however, are within the poorest classes. As Woodcock (1983) suggests, perhaps one-fifth of all Indians are actively participating in a continuing economic upswing (many of them rich) creating a kind of floating bourgeois crust. Its mark is manifest in the sections of new pretentious villas on the outskirts of Delhi and other great cities that present a stark contrast to the bustees (settlement of rickety shacks) where the poor emigrants from the countryside live. Below the top layers a gray mass of another holding its own against truly crushing poverty the condition of the remaining 40 pre cent, approximately 300 million unfortunates live (Woodcock, pg 8). Thus, in the major cities, a stark contrast is

being created where the richer and poorer can be living side by side one another creating a dichotomist economic geographic situation.

To introduce this information, a one-day unit on the reasons for third world rural-urban migration using India as a case study is needed in the form of a class discussion. Information included in this 60 minute lesson will include, push-full factors for migration, India's increases in industrialization, sites and locations of slums as well as industry, reasons for slums, potential jobs for individual within the slums as well as for the middle class, and future prospects. This first day unit will be a combination of lecture, question and answer and discussion with the ultimate goal of introducing the students to this world-wide problem of rural-urban third world migration.

Day Two: Critical Thinking Activity

The second day of this unit deals with a critical thinking assignment in which the students will debate the different geographic characteristics of the slums and will also role play different characters within a fictitious slum. The idea behind this unit comes from an article about urbanization in developing countries written utilizing role playing written by Maslela (1994). In the assignment for this class, the setting is a squatter settlement located in the outskirts of a city in India. The instructor can pick any city they want but must research the characteristics about the city in detail. The actors involved in this situation can include any of the following: tenants (different occupations including rickshaw puller, servant, etc.), resident landlord, industrial and commercial developers, local and national policy makers, and social and environmental activists. Cultural factors such as gender, race, religious background and other issues can also

be taken into account given that they coincide with the actual makeup of the cultural characteristics of that particular part of India.

During this class period, students will assume the part of one of the actors living in the squatter settlement in India. Each of the different types of characters (haves vs. have nots) need to be assigned to make sure that every scenario within the economic framework of rural-urban migration is covered. The instructor will need to invent different situations in which the students will be able to act out the daily situation that would exist for all parties related to this slum. These could include temporary jobs, famine problems, environmental concerns, monsoon floods, birth of children and the problems of feeding the new family members, etc. The assignment is left flexible so that the instructor can select situations that he/she would feel comfortable with given the students educational background. This way, students can learn different interpretations on how each person fits into the entire scheme of a slum neighborhood in ways that the students can optimally critically analyze. Once the roles are selected, students will then act out their role with the instructor being used as the facilitator to make sure that the general theory of urban-rural migration patterns and their consequences of are followed.

Like Masilela's project, this role-playing exercise is based on a hypothetical situation to allow student participants to define their parts with regard's to policies that exist within this certain part of India. The objective is to ensure that students gain a clear picture of the problems, aspirations, and interest of the part rely will play in the early stage of this exercise. As Masilela (1994) dictates, a crucial element of the exercise is for students to gain an understanding of how their real world counterparts are likely to act within the realties relevant to their lives.

Day Three: Slide Presentation

Day three will be a slide presentation of India's slums from slides taken during the 1997 Seminar "Continuity and Change: India on the Threshold of the 21st Century". During the slide presentation, students will be encouraged to discuss many of the social, economic and cultural issues as they pertain to geography, especially in relation to the previous role-playing exercise they have just finished. These slides were taken by this author and are housed in the geography department at Prestonsburg Community College. A caption of the slides that are being used is as follows:

Slide 1: Two woman peasants on the streets of Delhi. Characteristics that should be discussed with this slide include the gap between the have and the have nots within India and how there are gender differences within the country with job status, job types, etc. even within the slums.

Slide 2: Laundry hanging out to dry at squatter settlement in Delhi. Two details can be noticed in this photograph. First is the gender differences as noted above. Second is the building materials used to build different shanties. From this photograph, a permanent building was able to be constructed using stone and the roof made from tin with rocks used to keep it in place. Ingredients can be found on the streets or purchased very inexpensively giving the slum patrons at least shelter.

Slide 3: Tents located by a park in Delhi. India has a substantial number of recent migrants where many of them can be found having to stay on the streets during the night. At some locations, they have been able set up a temporary squat as seen in this photograph. Note the businessman who passes ignoring the scene as this is a normal part of everyday life.

Slide 4: Children Beggars outside Delhi. Many of the people living in the slums are children who also must fend for themselves. This photo shows two children begging on the streets. From this photograph, discussion of dramatic population increases and its effect on migration can be highlighted. Also, a discussion of ramifications of street children can be highlighted.

Slide 5: Tent Squat - Jaipur. The condenseness of the squats and lack of available land for the poor can be demonstrated in this photograph. This particular squat was only two blocks in size and yet has hundreds of families.

Slide 6: Children in slum - Jaipur. From the photograph the conditions of the children as well as health conditions within the slums are observed. Also, note the poor conditions of the land stipulating that the peasants are given the land nobody else (especially developers) wants or can use.

Slide 7: Condensed slum - Jaipur. Notice lack of sanitation or clean water.

Slide 8: Slum neighborhood next to working class residential - Jaipur. This photograph demonstrate the geographic characteristics of the proximity of slum neighborhoods to the working class and even upper class neighborhoods. This photograph is taken within one block of a large scale five star hotel in Jaipur. In India, the proximity of slums to better neighborhoods is profound yet notice that the lack of potential for alternative uses of the land at present within this photograph.

Slide 9: Clearing of garbage by fire in slum -Jaipur. In this photograph, one can see the elimination of garbage by setting it on fire due to lack of alternative garbage collection services. This can, of course, lead to other environmental problems such as disease, pollution, etc..

Slide 10: Hogs feeding on garbage - Jaipur. This photograph demonstrates how animals (cows, hogs, etc.) can play a vital part of involuntary garbage collection for cities (especially slums) in which other forms of garbage collection are not found.

Slide 11: Shanty settlement on the streets of Mumbai. From this photograph, one can see how some migrants have been able to build permanent settlements on the sidewalk next to residential housing. Notice the ingredients that were used in the making of this housing creating a semi-permanent residence. Also, note the size of each individual unit in contrast to the sidewalk and surrounding buildings.

Slide 12: Slum neighborhood - Mumbai. From this photograph, one can see the proximity of the shanty to the downtown section of Mumbai, seen in the background. One can also see the condenseness due to lack of available land found within the city. This is an excellent compare and contrast photograph to demonstrate geographic proximity of the slums compared to the economic heart of the city.

Slide 13: Inside a shanty - Mumbai. From this photograph, one can see the limited space within one particular shanty where an entire family must live. This, again, is due to the lack of available space and the overwhelming number of migrants that live and continue to migrate to the Mumbai area.

Slide 14: Human Waste on the street - Mumbai. The lack of available sanitation forces people to use any area possible including the streets. This can lead to disease and other environmental problems. Also, note the proximity of the middle income residential neighborhoods in the background.

Slide 15: Squats alongside the ocean - Mumbai. This photograph demonstrates the lack of available land in Mumbai and how many of the squats are forced to settle on land that is unproductive.

Slide 16: Collecting trash in slums - Mumbai. Taken at the same spot as previous photograph, one can see how this land is essentially useless compared to the surrounding land.

Conclusion

The purpose of this three day unit is to introduce to problems of India's slums from a geographic perspective (third world rural-urban migration) to freshman and sophomore level geography students. It is intended to give the students a better appreciation of India by understanding some of the economic hardships that the country presently encounters. By using this project, students should gain a better knowledge of India while understanding the basic concept of rural-urban third world migration.

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